1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

CHAPTER ONE

The Setting

1. THE SETTING

105 131 SHAMIRPET is a village situated at a distance of about twenty-five miles from the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secundrabad in the Deccan plateau of India. Culturally it lies in the region known as Telangana, which is itself a part of the wider culture-area of Andhra-desa. Telangana is a country of fertile fields and barren rocks; a land of temples, tanks and lakes. It is estimated that there are over twenty thousand lakes and tanks in this region, which covers an area of more than 42,000 square miles. Shamirpet is located by the side of one of these tanks and lies on the road that links the capital city of Hyderabad with Karimnagar, the headquarters of the northern district of that name.

133 134 137 132 The picturesque landscape of the village is truly characteristic of the Deccan plateau. The soil is in part black and in part red, and is suitable for the cultivation of rice, millet, castor and other oil-seeds, pulses and tobacco. An endless series of barren rocks formed of gneisses and granites dominates the land. Tall palmyra trees stand magnificently and imperiously against the often-clear sky, evergreen shrubs circle the rock formations and tamarind trees grow here and there near human habitation. In the countryside surrounding Shamirpet the average annual rainfall is about twenty-five inches. From Indian standards, the climate is moderate and knows no extremes either in winter or in summer. The days during the summer season are rather hot, the temperature often touching 112° F., but the evenings and nights are always cool and pleasant. In some winter nights the temperature drops to 137 45° F. There is little forest in the country immediately surrounding